

REMARKS

Upon entry of this Reply, claims 1-16 will remain in this application. Reconsideration of the application is requested.

The indication that claims 3-7, 10, 12, and 13 contain allowable subject matter provided in section 6 on pages 4-5 of the Office Action is acknowledged with appreciation. Claims 3, 4, 7, 12, and 13 have been rewritten in the manner referred to in this section and should now be allowable. Dependent claims 5, 6, and 10 should be allowable as well.

Copies of the drawings of corresponding international application PCT/CH98/00346 are being submitted together with this Reply for the Examiner's convenience and in accordance with the request set forth in section 1 on page 2 of the Office Action.

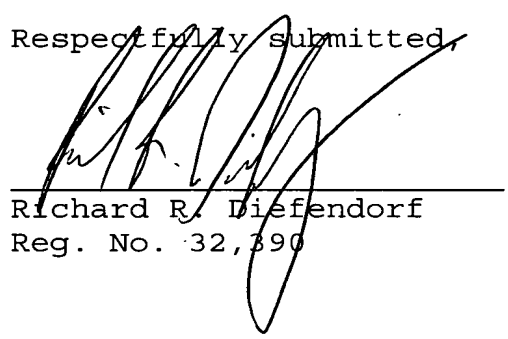
Reconsideration of the rejection of independent claims 1 and 11 based on U.S. Patent 4,966,802 to Hertzberg is requested. According to the present invention, at least one end of the carbon panel is split into strips which remain parallel or at an acute angle with respect to each other. In the Hertzberg composite discussed by the Examiner, by contrast, splitting is made so that the flanges 45 are oriented at relative angles of 180° with respect to each other and 90° with respect to the stacks 41. As amended above, claims 1 and 11 reflect this

distinction, and claims 1 and 11, as amended, are patentable. Dependent claims 2, 8, 9, and 14-16 are patentable as well.

It is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions after considering this Reply, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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Richard R. Diefendorf
Reg. No. 32,390

CROWELL & MORING LLP
P.O. Box 14300
Washington, D.C. 20044-4300
Telephone No.: (202) 624-2500
Facsimile No.: (202) 628-8844
RRD:msy

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In each claim appearing below, deletions are bracketed and additions are underlined.

1. (Twice amended) Reinforcing device for supporting structures comprising:

a carbon panel, at least one end of the carbon panel being split into at least two strips extending parallel to or at an acute angle with respect to each other, and

an end element in which said at least one end terminates.

3. (Twice amended) Reinforcing device [according to Claim 1] for supporting structures comprising:

a carbon panel, at least one end of the carbon panel being split into at least two strips, and

an end element in which said at least one end terminates,

wherein the strips are inserted at least partially into retaining slots of the end element that are located wedgewise relative to one another.

4. (Twice amended) Reinforcing device [according to Claim 1] for supporting structures comprising:

a carbon panel, at least one end of the carbon panel
being split into at least two strips, and

an end element in which said at least one end
terminates,

wherein each end of the panel is split into
superimposed strips of approximately equal thickness.

7. (Twice amended) Reinforcing device [according to
Claim 1] for supporting structures comprising:

a carbon panel, at least one end of the carbon panel
being split into at least two strips, and

an end element in which said at least one end
terminates,

wherein the end element is a parallelepiped made of
metal or plastic.

11. (Twice amended) Method for reinforcing supporting
elements with reinforcing devices comprising:

cutting carbon panels to an appropriate length,
separating or splitting each panel at at least one end
into at least two strips of approximately the same thickness or
width extending parallel to or at an acute angle with respect to
each other,

bringing the at least one end into a connection with an end element, and

gluing the arrangement to a tension side of a supporting element to be reinforced.

12. (Twice amended) Method [according to Claim 11] for reinforcing supporting elements with reinforcing devices comprising:

cutting carbon panels to an appropriate length,
separating or splitting each panel at at least one end
into at least two strips of approximately the same thickness or
width,

bringing the at least one end into a connection with an
end element, and

gluing the arrangement to a tension side of a supporting
element to be reinforced,

wherein the strips of approximately the same thickness or width are introduced into separate retaining slots of the end element which are arranged fanwise with respect to one another and glued in place or soaked with an adhesive.

13. (Twice amended) Method [according to Claim 11] for reinforcing supporting elements with reinforcing devices comprising:

cutting carbon panels to an appropriate length,
separating or splitting each panel at at least one end
into at least two strips of approximately the same thickness or
width,

bringing the at least one end into a connection with an
end element, and

gluing the arrangement to a tension side of a supporting
element to be reinforced,

wherein each of the ends of the carbon panels is separated or split into three strips and the arrangement, before gluing to the supporting element, is pretensioned relative to the latter by clamping means and then glued in a pretensioned state to the supporting element.